

Swan Song: Romantic comedy and sports - odd bedfellows or complementary teammates?

By

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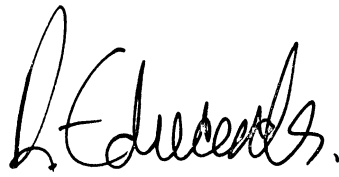
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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this exegesis and screenplay has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the exegesis and screenplay has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the exegesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the exegesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Edwards', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russell Edwards

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ABSTRACT

Working within the established film genre of romantic comedy, the screenplay *Swan Song* is about a man and a woman reaching that narrative moment when their loving commitment to each other is confirmed. The screenplay blends the romantic comedy with the odd bedfellow of the sports film. This combination has rarely attempted in the genre-based American cinema and remains untried in the Australian context. The advantage of mixing the two genres is that the traditional audience for romantic comedy (generalised as women) can be matched with the traditional audience for sports films (generalised as men).

The second half of the material submitted is an exegesis addressing the theoretical issues investigated during the script's development. It represents an argument for blending the romantic comedy and sport genres and explores the issues generated by this radical combination. Endeavouring to confine my discussion to Australian film history, the exegesis focuses on Australian Rules football and romantic comedy as sparsely represented in Australian cinema over the past forty years. Both the romantic comedy and the sports genre place import on the creation of a 'magic space'. A hybrid of these two genres creates a sacred space that is significant for both men and women. Following on from this magic space concept, discussion focusses on cinematic representations of masculinity in the Australian context, the problematising of maleness in Australian cinema and how Australian male stereotypes have presented difficulties for the development of Australian romantic comedy. Also discussed are local films that have chosen to highlight different representations of Australian masculinity, without demonising it. These are films that represent male characters pursuing feelings and vulnerabilities frequently denied to Australian males in our domestic cinema. Linked with this, the exegesis argues that the locally untapped genre of romantic comedy – with or without sports – is possible in Australian cinema. *Swan Song* blends romantic comedy and Australian Rules football and, as such, lends support for the cinematic depiction of different masculinities to those the 'sports film' could create in isolation. Instead of hegemony, the 'magic space' of romantic comedy actually permits success for men and women at the same time. My script *Swan Song* argues for entertainment, laughter and love – for both men and women – rather than one privileged over the other.